

# Facing Sexual Harassment at Work? Here's What You Should Do

Reema's project partner - Sanjay - has been harassing her for the last few weeks. It started with a friendly handshake that lingered too long, which then progressed to a hand on her shoulder, and then unwelcome hugs.

He became bolder every day, and his advances kept increasing even after Reema clearly articulated that she found his conduct unacceptable.

Exasperated, Reema shared her story with Pooja - a trusted colleague.

***Pooja (firmly):** File a complaint against Sanjay.*

***Reema (looking at Pooja like she had grown horns):** Huh... Are you serious? To whom should I complain? ... and who will take me seriously?*

***Pooja (kind, but in a matter-of-fact tone):** Pooja, our organisation, has an Internal Committee or IC that has been constituted as per law to handle sexual harassment cases at work. You can file a complaint with the IC, which will not only take you seriously... it will also conduct an in-depth inquiry, and if found guilty, recommend appropriate actions against Sanjay.*

***Reema (concerned):** But what if everyone gets to know...?*

***Pooja:** Don't worry, everything will be confidential.*

***Reema (staring at Pooja in surprise):** Thanks so much, Pooja... I'll get in touch with them right away!*

**Course: Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace**  
**Lesson 14, 15: Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)**

If like Reema, you too are oblivious to the existence of the IC which handles sexual harassment cases at Hafele India, then this lesson will help fill in those knowledge gaps.

Let us start by looking at...

## **The Law Behind the Formation of the Internal Committee or IC**

As we had seen in a previous lesson, according to the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplaces (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 – hereafter referred to as the Act – employers must constitute an Internal Committee, which is:

1. A safe place for female employees to file sexual harassment complaints.
2. Responsible for prevention, prohibition and redressal of sexual harassment at the workplace.

Next, let us look at

## **The IC's Composition**

As prescribed by the Act:

1. The IC must be composed of a minimum of four members, out of which 50% should be women.
2. The IC should include:
  - i. A Chairperson, who must be a female employee at a senior position
  - ii. A minimum of two members from amongst the employees, who are committed to the cause of women, have experience in social work or have legal knowledge
  - iii. One external member from a Non-Governmental Organisation or an association that is committed to the cause of women, or a person familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment

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3. Every IC member shall hold office for not more than three years
4. If an establishment has offices or administrative units in different locations, an IC has to be set up at every location

Now, the question is - Who can file a complaint with the IC? How can it be filed? And what is the process to file a complaint? These are topics we will be picking up in the next lesson.

Before proceeding to the next lesson, though, please take the accompanying quiz.

Happy Quizzing!